

and full-day kindergarten so that Colorado's children are able to get a quality education. I will note that in President Obama's most recent State of the Union address, he called for a nationwide effort to establish a mechanism to keep students in school until they are 18 years old or graduate high school. It did not surprise me to learn that Wilma, in her days as a state legislator, carried measures to do the same for Colorado's youth over 20 years ago.

Wilma served as a voice for the community's poor by carrying legislation that supported Colorado's most vulnerable populations, and she successfully advanced provisions that improved the living conditions of both the elderly and troubled youth.

Wilma also developed a prowess tackling thorny budgetary issues. As she rose to become an influential member of the State legislature, she was the first minority woman to earn a prestigious spot on the Joint Budget Committee responsible for guiding Colorado's budget priorities.

Yet Wilma's achievements go beyond what I have mentioned here and are not limited to her time in the General Assembly. Those of us who know Wilma know that her life extends far beyond that.

Wilma was the first African-American woman to be the First Lady of Denver. She stood by her husband, former Mayor Wellington Webb, as an active leader in the affairs of the city and a respected figure within its diverse communities. I know how proud my friend Wellington is of his wife, and vice versa. They are the epitome of a "power couple," but more importantly, a couple devoted to public service.

As First Lady, Wilma was unyielding in her efforts to end drug abuse and consequently devoted much of her time and energy to strengthening Colorado's comprehensive anti-drug abuse programs. These programs, the first of their kind, were enacted as a result of a bill she carried during her days in the Colorado State House.

Wilma was also devoted to resolving the unique issues facing families and youth throughout Denver. As if that did not keep her busy enough, Wilma took on the responsibility of hosting local, national and foreign dignitaries in Denver, and also traveling abroad to over 23 countries to represent Denver and build relationships with worldwide partners. She was instrumental in creating and implementing the Mayor's vision for the arts and played a key role in revitalizing the cultural and artistic vitality of Denver. In one notable example, Wilma founded the Denver Art, Culture and Film Foundation to raise money for public art projects.

And she certainly did not stop after her First Lady of Denver duties were done. Colorado and the Mountain West were fortunate to have Wilma's leadership extend to a new position: she became the U.S. Secretary of Labor's Representative for the Department of Labor's Region VIII. To no one's sur-

prise, Wilma yet again blazed a new trail as the first woman to fill this role, where she had significant budgetary oversight and directed special projects to resolve labor and workforce issues in the West. Her commitment to public service on the Federal level was just as productive as her time working at the State level.

It is clear Wilma has had an extraordinary career. She is warm, she is a visionary leader, she is exceptionally skilled, and she is driven by the desire to do what is right for Coloradans. Yet throughout her years as a leader, she has maintained a strong sense of the importance of family. As a daughter, a wife, a mother and a grandmother, she has been a cornerstone for all those around her. As someone who values the importance of balancing work life with family life, I respect the example that Wilma sets in that regard.

As I conclude, let me say to my colleagues that I am proud—and Coloradans are proud to count Wilma among our numbers. She has earned the 2012 Civil Rights Award through her years of dedication, innovation and persistence in making Colorado a better place. She is a pioneer for civil rights and a forward-thinking public servant who has etched her mark on the lives of Colorado's families, youth and marginalized communities. I commend Wilma for advancing the rights of every Coloradan and for a lifetime of service to others. On behalf of all Coloradans, I extend hearty congratulations on Wilma's well-earned honor, with full confidence that she will continue her groundbreaking work.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013—PM 40

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975 as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on Appropriations; and the Budget:

To the Congress of the United States:

America was built on the idea that anyone who is willing to work hard and

play by the rules, can make it if they try—no matter where they started out. By giving every American a fair shot, asking everyone to do their fair share, and ensuring that everyone played by the same rules, we built the great American middle class and made our country a model for the world.

Today, America is still home to the world's best universities, most productive workers, and most innovative companies. But for many Americans, the basic bargain at the heart of the American Dream has eroded.

Long before this recession hit, there was a widespread feeling that hard work had stopped paying off; that fewer and fewer of those who contributed to the success of our economy actually benefited from that success. Those at the very top grew wealthier while everyone else struggled with paychecks that did not keep up with the rising cost of everything from college tuition to groceries. And as a result, too many families found themselves taking on more and more debt just to keep up—often papered over by mounting credit card bills and home equity loans.

Then, in the middle of 2008, the house of cards collapsed. Too many mortgages had been sold to people who could not afford—or even understand—them. Banks had packaged too many risky loans into securities and then sold them to investors who were misled or misinformed about the risks involved. Huge bets had been made and huge bonuses had been paid out with other people's money. And the regulators who were supposed to prevent this crisis either looked the other way or did not have the authority to act.

In the end, this growing debt and irresponsibility helped trigger the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Combined with new tax cuts and new mandatory programs that had never been paid for, it threw our country into a deep fiscal hole. And millions of hardworking Americans lost their jobs, their homes, and their basic economic security.

Today, we are seeing signs that our economy is on the mend. But we are not out of the woods yet. Instead, we are facing a make-or-break moment for the middle class, and for all those who are fighting to get there. What is at stake is whether or not this will be a country where working people can earn enough to raise a family, build modest savings, own a home, and secure their retirement. This is the defining issue of our time.

This Budget reflects my deep belief that we must rise to meet this moment—both for our economy and for the millions of Americans who have worked so hard to get ahead.

We built this Budget around the idea that our country has always done best when everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules. It rejects the "you're on your own" economics that have led to a widening gap between the